



THE VOICE

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Minds We Meet

Interviewing Students Like You!

Why Zombies?

The Search for Brains

The Fit Student

Crushing the Job Interview!

Plus:

Tuition Inspiration

Personalized Education?

and much more!



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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR



We love to hear from you!
Send your questions and comments to voicemagazine.org,
and please indicate if we may publish your letter!

Hey! Did you know the Voice Magazine has a [Facebook page](#)?

No kidding! We also do the [twitter](#) thing once in a while if you're into that.

Editorial

Blue Ribbon for Participation

Karl Low



The United Conservative Party recently released the report from what they are calling a “Blue Ribbon Panel” about Alberta Finances. The report is also being called the MacKinnon report because the head of the panel was Janice MacKinnon. A woman responsible for closing over 52 hospitals during her time in Saskatchewan. If you haven’t heard about or read the report yet, that last sentence gives you a clue as to what’s inside.

Despite the Alberta government describing the panel as an “Independent panel of experts”, the panel was told that their mandate was to review the province’s economic and financial processes and should include providing a plan to balance the budget by 2022-2023, without raising taxes.

How a panel can be independent while at the same time being told of specific solutions they could not look at is a debate for another day, but because of that, it should come as no surprise that they returned with a recommendation that the province make significant cuts across the board, particularly concentrating on health care and education.

When it comes to education, particular focus was given to what is called “performance-based funding”, that is, schools that are having lower rates of success should not be given more money. If you’re an AU student, this should prick up your ears with concern, because Athabasca University has always had a significant issue with the number of students who drop out or withdraw from their studies, degree incomplete. Being a distance university, this is unsurprising, as many people simply don’t have the motivation it takes to be able to propel yourself through an entire degree, especially one as rigorous as those at AU. But if the MacKinnon report is followed, this emphasis on “end performance” stands to put AU directly in the crosshairs of a government seeking to make cuts so that it can continue to live on royalty payments instead of taxes.

If you’re taking an AU class in Alberta, I would suggest that right now is when you need to start getting upset and letting the provincial government know that cutting AU’s budget even further is not a good idea if we want a skilled workforce in this province. Call or write your MLA and make sure they promise that AU won’t be on the chopping block, as we already get far less funding per student than any other post-secondary institution in the province.

Then, once you’re done that, come back and read our latest student interview, with a student in Medicine Hat who would have been unlikely to take her schooling or find her calling if it wasn’t for AU. Also, Marie Well gives you some solid advice for how to crush that next job interview in the latest Fit Student, and if you’ve ever wondered what’s up with the pop-culture craze about zombies, Wanda Waterman makes some canny observations. And when you’re done all that, we still have news, events, advice, scholarships and more!

Enjoy the read!

A stylized, handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Karl".

MINDS WE MEET



While working toward her Bachelor of Commerce Degree (with an accounting major) from Medicine Hat, Kayli Tellman also works at a pharmacy, and recently spent some time speaking with The Voice Magazine.

Could you provide a brief introduction of yourself? Who are you, where are you from?

My name is Kayli Tellman, I am nineteen years old, and I am in my second year at Athabasca University. I am working part-time at a pharmacy while completing my degree. I was born and raised in Medicine Hat, Alberta and I still am living there now.

What program are you currently enrolled in?

I am in the Bachelor of Commerce program with a major in accounting and I am really enjoying my program!

Describe the path that led you to Athabasca University. What was it that made you realize you wanted to go back to school, and what pushed you into the program you've signed up for?

After I graduated high school, I went into a science program at a local college, though I was not enjoying the program and I felt like I did not have a lot of options for school if I wanted to stay in Medicine Hat. That's when I found AU, and it checked off everything I wanted out of

a university. I have never wanted to move away from home, and I liked my job too much to quit so that I could do school full-time. Also, math has always been one of my favourite subjects in school, so accounting seemed like a great fit for me.

What do you like to do when you are not studying? Any hobbies?

When I'm not studying or working (which does not leave me with a lot of spare time) I enjoy playing video games or reading books. I also like to get together with my friends quite often.

What are your plans for this education once you finish? What would be your dream job?

I plan to work as an accountant once I graduate. Ideally, I would like to become a CPA, so that would probably be my dream job.

Who in your life had the greatest influence on your desire to learn?

My parents have probably had the biggest influence on my desire to learn. My parents have always encouraged me to do my best in school and they have supported me and helped me become the first person in my family to go to university.

Describe your experience with online learning so far. What do you like?

So far, I have really enjoyed online learning. I have always been an independent learner in school so teaching myself the course material has not been too challenging. I really like the freedom and flexibility that AU has given me. One of my favourite parts is not having to leave my house to do school.

Is there anything you dislike about online learning?

One thing I dislike is that I feel different than my friends who are not doing online school. Sometimes, I compare my progress in my degree with people who are not doing online school and feel like I am very behind compared to them. I know that is not exactly true, but it is one of the downsides that I find.

Have you ever waived about continuing your schooling? What caused it and what got you through it?

I wavered the most with continuing school while I was in the science program. It was not a good fit for me, and I wasn't sure what other options I had that did not involve moving away on my own. I spent a lot of time looking at different career options and universities until I found AU. The excitement of finding a schooling option that fit my life perfectly gave me the motivation to keep pursuing a degree. My first year at AU has been very positive and I haven't wavered with school since.

What's your favorite AU course that you have taken so far, and why? Would you recommend the course to others?

I would have to say ACCT 253 (Introductory Financial Accounting). This course was my first accounting course and I absolutely loved it. Before I took this course, I had very little experience with accounting, so I knew that my first accounting course would let me know if this degree would be right for me. I loved everything I learned in ACCT 253 and that's when I knew I had picked the right degree. Since I was always so uncertain with what I wanted to do with my life, figuring out what I liked was a great feeling for me! Yes, I would absolutely recommend this course to others.

What have you given up to go to AU that you regret the most? Was it worth it?

My free time is what I have given up the most to go to AU. I rarely have time to relax, so I do regret that, but I am sure it will all be worth it in the end when I am done my degree.

How do you find communications with your course tutors?

Communication with my tutors has been great so far. All the tutors I have had have been quick to mark my assignments and answer my questions. Because I have had good experiences with them, I have not missed having a traditional teacher.

What is your biggest pet peeve, if you have one?

My biggest pet peeve is probably bad drivers. Especially people who drive way too close behind me.

Describe the proudest moment in your life.

My proudest moment so far would probably be when I graduated high school. I felt like I had accomplished a lot at that time. But I am sure I will feel prouder to graduate from AU, so I know I will have prouder moments in my life going forward.

Please tell us something that few people know about you.

One thing that distinguishes me from other people is that I love to write creative stories! I wrote a novella when I was fifteen and the people who read it have liked it. I have not shared my passion for writing with many people, so it is not very known about me.

Have you written anything more recently?

I have not had much time to write any new stories because of school and work, but I hoping to have more time one day.

What is the most valuable lesson you have learned in life?

I think the most valuable thing I have learned is to fix what is making you unhappy in life. If you are unhappy with the situation you are in, there are ways you can change it. I do not think there is much point in putting up with the things that are making you unhappy, just because you are used to living with them.

Have you traveled? Where has life taken you so far?

The farthest I have travelled is to Disneyworld in Orlando when I was eleven and Maui when I was thirteen.

Out of the places you have been to, which was your favorite and why?

Going to Orlando was so amazing because I got to go to the Harry Potter park in Universal Studios! It was definitely the coolest place I have ever been!

Are you reading any non-AU books right now?

I have not been reading many non-AU books lately, but I have started reading Harry Potter again. I have read the series many times but this time I am reading the books to my boyfriend so he can experience the magic too!

Brittany Daigle is 22 years old and completing her BSc in Computing Science & Information Systems with AU from Toronto, Ontario.



Scholarship of the Week

Digging up scholarship treasure for AU students.

Scholarship name: 2019 AES Engineering Scholarship

Sponsored by: AES Engineering

Deadline: October 6, 2019

Potential payout: \$500

Eligibility restriction: Applicants must be high school seniors or attending a post-secondary educational facility.

What's required: An email with contact and school info, along with a 500- to 1000-word essay on "When you look back on your life in 30 years, what would it take for you to consider your life successful? What relationships or accomplishments will be important on this journey?"

Tips: You don't need to be studying engineering to be eligible.

Where to get info: www.aesengineers.com/scholarships.php



The Fit Student Crushing the Job Interview!

Marie Well



Do you go into job interviews like a front-line paratrooper on the defensive? Your arms tied behind your back and a gag stuffed in your mouth? Well, that's how I feel in job interviews. And apparently, so might you—and many others.

Now, I'm going to show you how to crush the job interview. But I had help—lots of it—namely from Rodger Banister, author of *It's Not About You: How to Think Like an Employer and Get the Job You Really Want*.

I hope both you and I can use his wisdom—sketched within this article—as a template for interviewing. But do read Rodger Banister's five-stars e-book, as every one of his chapters is brilliant. Unbelievably, what follows below is only a small sampling from his book:

The first trick for winning the job is to get interviewers talking about their company. This shows you are curious and passionate about the business-and have done your homework. So, answer the question and then ask a question. Here's the skinny:

When they ask, "Tell me about yourself," here's what you do:

"Do not give them your life story. Only talk about your experience as it relates to the position they are offering" (Banister, 77%). When I talk about myself, I give a long list of skills that already exists on my resume. About halfway through my spiel, the interviewers start to yawn. I never realized that the answer had to be terse and well-planned. Another interviewer said I spent too much time stumbling over my words. She needed a brief to-the-point communicator. And do you remember the election with Trump? I recall candidate Carly Fiorina was so tightly scripted that she repeated nearly the exact same response in two different situations. But author Rodger Banister says don't memorize your spiel. Bring notes instead. They show you're prepared.

So, answer the question, "Tell me about yourself," with "I'm a (type of relevant degree) graduate with a specific focus in (specialization with a focus on the job being offered). I've spent the last X years working in (a discipline relevant to the job or company). I am passionate about (something in the job description) and am very eager to learn more about how you've been successful (doing something relevant to the industry of something relevant to the position being offered). Could you tell me more about that?" (Banister, 71%). Refer to the job description when filling in the blanks (Banister, n.d.).

Here's what to say when your interviewer asks, "What interests you about this job?"

"Keep your answer relevant to the job description" (Banister, 77%). Use keywords in the job description; for example, you could say, 'We studied agile methodology in school and want to work with a company that is dedicated to doing it right. I am obsessed with quality and take a

great deal of pride in watching customer reported bug counts decline. You mentioned that you follow Scrum-based development. Can you tell me more about what aspects of Scrum you focus on?" (Banister, 73%). You can guess what the keywords in the job description were. And note how your response asks a question of the employer at the end.

Unfortunately for me, in interviews I'd say, "I'm passionate about stone tiling. I especially like boulder stone." Or I'd say, "I have a weakness for pasta. As a teen, Mom used to make spaghetti before my basketball games." I bet everyone interviewing said the same type of things. And sometimes I'd have to work harder to find enthusiasm: "I think everyone needs a pair of shoes, and, besides, I love marketing."

And the following is how to respond when the interviewers asks, "Why are you thinking about leaving your current job? Or why did you leave your last job?"

"Resist all temptation to trash your last or current employer. It doesn't win you any points with your interviewers." Instead, say, 'I like my current job and I really like the people I work with. But I'm ready for a new challenge in my career. I want to be with an organization that's dedicated to professional development and challenging me on a day-to-day basis. Can you tell me a little bit about how your company grows its people?'" (Banister, 73%).

Author Rodger Banister says that we all left our former job because of garbage treatment. But don't tell the interviewer. If you don't reveal your woe, you might win the job.

I told one interviewer that I had a bad experience at one business. She told me that her husband applied to the same business and had a terrible experience, too. I got lucky with that coincidence. But don't take the risk. Keep quiet.

And don't say you left your last job because of the pay, lack of benefits, or long hours. The interviewer might think you're high maintenance.

"Why would you excel at this job?"

"Make some notes from the job description about some critical success factors they're considering for the position. Then parrot them back to them with your answer. If accountability is number one for them, then say how you've been accountable in the past" (Banister, 78%).

For instance, say, "I'm a doer and I have always excelled in positions where I'm given a degree of autonomy to achieve my department's goals. I crave accountability in my teammates and myself, so I am happy to see that you have stated KPIs that you use to measure performance Can you tell me about some KPIs you'd use to gauge my performance in this position?" (Banister, 74%).

AU-thentic Event Upcoming AU Related Events

Canadian Institute of Health Research (CIHR) Info Session

Mon, Sept 9, 9:00 to 10:30 am MDT
Peace Hills Trust Tower, Room 1115, 10011 -
109 Street NW, Edmonton AB
In-person and online
Hosted by CIHR and AU Faculty of Graduate
Studies
www.eventbrite.ca/e/cihr-interactive-information-sessions-tickets-66958690245
Register online at above link

AU Has a Library?

Intro to Library Resources and Services

Tues, Sept 10, 11:00 am to 12:00 pm MDT
Online
Hosted by AU Library
library.athabascau.ca/orientations.html
No pre-registration necessary

Online MBA Info Session

Wed, Sept 11, 10:00 to 11:00 am MDT
Online
Hosted by AU Faculty of Business
business.athabascau.ca/event-details/online-mba-executives-information-session-2019-sep11/
Register online at above link

All events are free unless otherwise specified

Just don't say to a shoe seller, "I'm a shoe horse. What more needs be said?"

If the interviewer asks: "What do you consider to be your weakness?"

Once I said to a recruiter that I was "oversensitive and unconfident." She thanked me for my honesty, and that was the last I heard from her. Never reveal anything remotely weak about yourself to an interviewer. And don't use the clichés, such as "I'm a perfectionist" or "I work too hard" (Banister, n.d.).

Instead, "always use the example of 'knowledge', i.e. I'd like to have more knowledge about X. So long as it isn't a critical element of the skills they need for the job you should be fine" (Banister, 78%). A comical but ineffective answer, in my opinion, is to say, "My weakness is that I didn't apply a year ago. I could've really helped you guys." That's just a joke comment. Please don't use it.

When they ask, "What do you know about our company so far?" you should reply:

"I'm interested in knowing more about your [insert something that is topically relevant – maybe from a press release or something you read on their web site]. What were some of the challenges you had to overcome and what long-range plans do you have?" (Banister, 78%).

I try to recite from memory a list of services they offer. Yawn! Bore every employer. I even say, "Your Facebook page looks professional." But when they ask me how I could improve their Facebook page, I say, "Just keep doing what you're doing!" Wrong answer. Complimenting the current marketing staff and impressing the interviewer are two different ballparks.

The interviewer might ask you about a time you showed either "leadership, independent, thinking or action, strategic thinking, teamwork, conflict resolution"

"Once you've answered the question turn it back on them and ask them to give you an example of when you'd need to demonstrate that attribute working for them" (Banister, 78%).

And add metrics to your response, says the Bannister.

For teamwork, I might cite the time a manager asked me how to build a Venn diagram in PowerPoint. I taught him how to build the diagram from scratch, but I knew he needed a different diagram. But he wanted the Venn. Later, during a meeting, he took credit for the Venn diagram—even though I was sitting at the table, too. When the boss asked him to revise the diagram, he asked me to help him again, which I did. Again, he gave me no credit. So, in interviews, I've used that story as an example of teamwork, but it's less teamwork, more doormat.

And never tell a story about how you curled up and cried. I used to cry a lot. And never break down crying during an interview (Banister, n.d.). A hard lesson I've learned is that sulking makes us doormats. On the flipside, we empower ourselves by taking 100% responsibility for our errors, by assessing how we could improve, and by staying upbeat.

When an interviewer asks, "What is most important to you in a new position?" talk about this:

"Finding a more efficient way of doing something, learning about customer needs and increasing market insight, providing leadership or great teamwork" (Banister, 78%). If these don't do, find buzzwords in the job description and parrot them.

I often say company culture is most important to me. But this answer offers nothing to the employer. It expects; not gives. And whatever you answer, be prepared to answer the question, "How have you demonstrated these traits in the past?"

And "just remember to make your answer about something the company is trying to accomplish—otherwise, you're in danger of discussing something that they have no interest in and isn't relevant, which doesn't bode well for you" (Banister, 77%).

When asked, “What would you do in the first 90 days in this position?”

“How would you define success for me in this role after 90 days?” (Banister, 77%). Author Rodger Banister says, “this question is ridiculous, and I can’t believe employers even ask it. I wouldn’t even answer this question if asked because I’d just be guessing at the answer” (Banister, 77%).

One rude headhunter would email me a blunt note that said, “Why you? How will you hit the ground running?” He’d give no background on the company. I felt like asking his higher-up: “Why him?”

Never miss a chance to impress when the interviewer asks, “What questions do you have for me?”

“Do not end your interview with ‘Nope, I’m good.’ It’s your last opportunity to ask one more, good question, even if it’s asking about the next steps in the process” (Banister, 78%).

I sometimes ask, “What do you love most about the job?” I read about asking this in another book or possibly a video. “I also ask, ‘What would a perfect day of the ideal employee look like?’ I used to ask, “Who are you competitors?” and “What are your long-term goals?” Yet, better questions would ask about events newsworthy to the company. So, check the press releases, financial statements, and blogs for the final slam-dunk.

A couple of times I answered with “When do I start?” Everyone laughed, but the job offer never followed.

So now you’ve got what it takes to crush the job interview. And you might just snatch a six-figure job—even if you’re not qualified.

References

Banister, Rodger. (n.d.). *It’s Not About You: How to Think Like an Employer and Get the Job You Really Want*. Victoria, BC. E-book.



Why Zombies?

Wanda Waterman



“Zombie stories are by nature dystopian. Zombies signify failure--of political will and social cohesion, of technology and medicine, of the human body and soul.”

- Elly Blue

Having been born in the last two weeks of the baby boom, I was finding myself increasingly flummoxed by my adult Gen X brother’s obsession with zombie films and television series. I didn’t get it; you could practically smell those rotting husks of humanity lurching

through whatever landscape, urban, rural, underground, or what-have-you in a raging lust for

the taste of living human brains. The images alone made me want to toss my brunch, and yet there were all my brother's cohorts sitting entranced before them, often munching popcorn.

So one day I asked, "Why is it that your generation is so fascinated with zombies?"

As usual my brother hemmed and hawed while his clever wife provided a ready answer: "Because *we are zombies*."

We've Found the Zombies, and They are Us

I've been turning this statement over in my mind for years, and its meaning is finally becoming clear.

The word "zombie" is said to have originated in Haiti ("zonbi" in Haitian Creole), where visitors observed dull, plodding shoe-gazers shuffling out to the fields to work. When the master was asked about them he said they were "zombie slaves," that is, dead people who'd been magically brought back to a semblance of life so that they could be exploited as free labour.

(We see this kind of thing today when a drug addict is no longer able to pay their dealer even after they've sold all their furniture, and so the dealer puts them to work in return for a continued supply, or when people who can no longer afford the internet are obliged to sit in wi-fi hotspots all day in order to feed their addiction to social media. But back to the mythology.)

On closer examination it turned out that the so-called "zombies" were mentally ill, brain-damaged by drugs, or being drugged regularly, and in the last case observers couldn't say if they'd begun their zombie sojourn as addicts kept supplied by masters or if they'd been captured and then drugged to ensure their compliance. It was probably some of both.

From Field Hands to Brain-eaters

This is the historical origin of the zombie archetype, but how it morphed from there has more to do with the state of third millennial pop culture in the West than it has to do with labour injustices in Haiti. On the screen the zombie quickly moved from a shuffling field hand to a monster that arises from the grave, or from wherever it was slain, mindless, decaying, and driven by a raging hunger for human flesh. As the archetype developed zombies slowly manifested a predilection for human brains.

Movies have explored this myth ad nauseum. Why? Because that's what the movies do: They help us negotiate change to figure out how we ought to think and feel about it.

Unconsciousness and digital technology

So what new reality do zombie films and shows help us navigate? I think my sister-in-law hit the nail on the head, but let me elaborate. Zombies have been drugged. They've been drugged by video games, music, images, and moving pictures whose production and place in our lives began going haywire somewhere in the eighties and has been going more and more nuts ever since.

It's no surprise that Steve Jobs didn't allow smart devices in the house while raising children; he'd seen the danger writ large. Meanwhile the youth of the West were becoming the 24-7 slaves of entertainment technology, and where that failed the growing street drug market was poised and ready to numb whatever consciousness remained.

Hence the brain-eating aspect of the zombie, which wasn't part of the myth's origins but rather developed with the horror movie genre. Zombies crave consciousness. When anyone from

Generation X on watches zombies on the screen they're watching themselves. Their sympathy is in small part with the zombies, which is why once in a while you see zombies portrayed sympathetically, with the living trying to reform them, befriend them, give them the break they need.

What do the undead really want?

The "undead" crave awareness. Knowing. This is why they want to eat our brains, but only occasionally does eating a brain result in consciousness for a zombie, as it did in *Warm Bodies*. This is how far civilization, or at least some of it, has fallen into decline. Many of those born after 1960 could have, like Steve Jobs, put strict limits on their consumption of mind-altering substances and entertainment. But there comes a point when it's almost too late, when the healthy human urge for awareness becomes subverted into a terrifying bloodlust.

Kids, don't let this happen to you. Wake up, tune in, and put limits on everything that has the power to blind you, even a little, to what is.

Wanda also writes the blog The Mindful Bard: The Care and Feeding of the Creative Self.



Student Sizzle — AU's Hot Social Media Topics

Following What's Hot around AU's Social Media Sites.

AthaU Facebook Group

Kayla asks if 18 courses in two years is possible; responses suggest that some students have actually done this, but it's not possible for everyone in every situation. Faye is trying to connect with other English majors; they are out there! Ashley wonders if a course extension fee is required to rewrite a final exam; responders assure that just the supplemental exam fee is needed.

Other posts include turning off course email notifications, struggling with the ECON 247 e-text, thanking a great tutor, and exam study practices.

reddit

An update on a previous post about appealing an exam grade: a student reports a successful appeal at the second stage, resulting in a passing grade. Other posts deal with courses CHEM 217, ECON 428, and MGSC 312.

Twitter

@AthabascaU tweets: "Check out Dr. @NeilFassina in the book 150 Extraordinary Canadians: Our Leadership and Innovation Legacy. The book looks at past and present generations of Canadians with significant accomplishments throughout our communities. t.co/tuD4jIt15."

@austudentsunion tweets: "Are you on track to complete your degree? Find out for sure with AU's DegreeWorks! <https://bit.ly/1HsUZcz>."



Fly on the Wall

Tuition and Inspiration

Jason Sullivan

Making our Return to Class Matter



September brings apprehension and ambivalence to students of all ages. Whether our classroom days are four or forty years hence the creeping shadows of autumn re-stimulate memories of that dreaded return to school. Our formative years were divided, as if with a paper cutter, every September; a whoosh of a sucking sound vacated our spirits as the blade dropped. Potential excitement at meeting new friends and having new experiences

was aided and abetted by corporate marketing gurus who had pummelled our parents with advertising for weeks in advance. Like the drumbeats of war, there was a sense that this was going to be a long campaign. Yet, at AU, things are different. Here we pay to play; we learn on our own time and in places of our choosing. The question of motivation still arises; we arrived here by choice, but our success depends on realizing how to make the most of our context.

So, with inchoate autumnal melancholy weighing on my mind, I drove south on Highway 97, on a route many Albertans are familiar with as they vacation in the sunny Okanagan. Passing through the town of Sicamous, on the shores of scenic Mara Lake, I noticed the town's entrance sign. It read 'Sicamous: Houseboat Capital of Canada'. The only problem is that, as of June 2019, the major houseboat rental company has gone into receivership. "Sicamous Mayor Terry Rice said the loss will have a heavy effect on employees, boat owners and other small businesses in a local economy that relies heavily on summer tourism" ([Schmunk](#), 2019).

Sad hulking houseboats dot the beach, emptied of their partying cargo, their slides shedding silent tears over the bums that never traversed their slopes. A houseboat capital without houseboats, what an eerie sight. But not one so unlike a student without a classroom. To others our student status can seem to be devoid of its essence. Where are the bums in seats; where's the soporific lecturer? To others we might, especially in September when throngs return to their institutionalized instruction, seem like pupils only in title.

What matters most is how we assess ourselves and how we go about succeeding this September. Where our classroom of one means a silent return to studies it helps to divide our motivation according to key components of ambition, desire, and economics. In the first place, there's big money at stake. Let's face it, an AU degree is not a cheap investment. Fiscal arguments seem cut and dried; if no one pays our tuition, or we have to take a second job to support our family, our academic careers will wither away like last year's tumbleweeds under the weight of winter snow. So it was with curiosity that I drove past Sicamous' second town-council funded sign. Emblazoned on it were the words 'inspire, explore, invest'.

The first two terms are value laden; at AU we all know the excited feeling when that brown cardboard box of new course materials arrives in the mail and we tear it open with whatever

scissors, knives, or garden shears are at hand. It's like Christmas for our brains! AU can be an exploration like no other; our very being seems on the verge of a remake such that a new model of our selves will emerge, chrysalis-like. Anything's possible. The inspiration naturally flows out from there, if only we can harness our newt-like attention spans and slog through the treacherous course readings. AU studies, like any authentic education, is not about binge watching videos online and then switching to Netflix when things get boring. To succeed we have to read and take notes and write and repeat. Looked at the wrong way, it's like doing laundry. Or it can be like breathing life into our mind's hearts, to use inspiration-speak.

In the background remains the economic component of our studies. Someone pays for the privilege of us furthering our education; ourselves, our employers, our student loans, our savings, our family, or our grants are the reason we're attending an invisible AU class at all. And if that funding dries up, we're sunk like an overloaded party barge. Our success, as we return to school in that admittedly dolorous month of September, depends on our realizing the good fortune of being able to afford AU as well as embracing the responsibility of becoming the self-starter dynamos that distance education demands. It takes endurance, perseverance and moxy. But most basically it takes money. Yet that's not our primary motivation or we'd probably have just sought a better-paying job without all the debt and stress of more schooling.

Life: A Sentimental Journey?

Sociological philosophy has weighed in with volumes of text comparing human life in terms of material economic realities and affective emotional factors. In a textbook for SOCI335, Irving M. Zeitlin introduced the figure of Vilfredo Pareto (1848-1923) with the remark that, for the latter, "sentiment is the fundamental and predominant force in society, the determining factor of human conduct" (Zeitlen, 263). When we want to light a fire under ourselves in our less motivated moments, it helps to trigger elements of our primal essence: inciting a fear of failure, of disappointing our tuition sponsors, works wonders. Better still is the stimulation of positive sentiments; remember how overjoyed you felt when you've just submitted a final course assignment?

My Okanagan College Sociology of Crime professor chose to play graphic videos of real-life crimes against workers by management where lax safety standards had deadly consequences. Those videos evoked raw feelings in a way that academic textbook readings could not. At the societal level Pareto notes that not all emotions are stimulated equally. All the inspiration and exploration in the world can't induce investors to open their cheque books to bankroll an unprofitable business such as Sicamous' houseboat company.

Pareto explains this fact succinctly and in terms any Machiavellian could understand. Different classes in society, defined by their relation to the means of production that produce capital (profit, to be reinvested) have, for Pareto, different ways of going about their moral business: "the elite acts primarily on the basis of enlightened self-interest, whereas the lower subject classes are moved largely by sentiment. To further its interests, the elite finds it expedient to appeal for support to the sentiments of the lower classes. Thus, the non-elite, the mass, is impelled into actions by blind forces, while the elite conducts itself according to a rational understanding of the situation." (Pareto, 267). This helps explain why two-thirds of the Sicamous town sign induces emotional involvement and enrichment (Inspire! Explore!) while only the third term (Invest!) hints at the core commitment required for the other two capacities to even exist. It takes money, honey, or this love boat is staying ashore.

Joining a charitable organization or volunteering at the Food Bank have both enriched my life. Yet, says Pareto, these kindly gestures haven't made economic difference in the way those with

the power to do so easily could but choose not to. In their time, Karl Marx and Frederick Engels saw their task as one of unwinding the moral claims of the ruling class; such that the vast majority of people who do not control the economic levers that govern society would realize that their lack of control over investment policy (rather than cruel words or malicious intentions) was what caused inequality, oppression, and that vague sense that one's life could be so much better. Marx's dialectical materialism set out "to deliver socialism from its entanglement with opposition bourgeois radicalism...however remorselessly and however fanatically, and however much at the cost of unity-between ethico-philosophical socialism and economic socialism" (Ruhle, 102).

However, our personal politics envision a good time full of exploration and inspiration, we must contend with the economic base of our existence in our daily life and studies. As students we can't depend on success by desire alone; we have to also treat AU like a paying job and an investment in ourselves. And, remembering those unread textbooks that end up on thrift store shelves by students who couldn't pass muster, to get the most out of our AU schooling we have to remember that real money, and our future earnings, are at stake.

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Brittany Daigle

Course Exam

Brittany Daigle

FNCE 371 (Applications in Corporate Finance) is a three-credit upper-level finance course that will have students applying fundamental concepts in corporate finance (from FNCE 370 (Overview of Corporate Finance)) to a variety of areas in corporate finance such as short-term financial management, lease management, and international concerns. With the assistance of case studies, students will apply corporate finance concepts to real-life situations, and, through videos, students will see how managers in real businesses apply corporate finance models in their firms' financial management systems. To take FNCE 371, students must first take its prerequisite, FNCE 370 and this course is not available for challenge.

For students who are planning to transfer this course to a Professional Accounting designation (i.e., CPA), you are required to achieve a grade higher than the minimum passing grade. See the Professional Accounting Designation Website for details.

Applications in Corporate Finance is made up of nine lessons, three assignments weighing ten percent each, a midterm examination worth thirty percent, and a final examination that weighs forty percent of the course grade. The nine lessons within this course cover interesting topics such as short-term finance and planning, leasing, credit, cash and liquidity, and risk management. Students' final grade in FNCE 371 is based on three assignments, one Midterm Examination, and one Final Examination. To receive credit for FNCE 371, students must achieve a minimum grade of fifty percent on the Final Examination and an overall course grade of at least "D" (fifty percent). Both the midterm and final examinations for this course will be written in the traditional pen and paper format.

Students should note that you are required to have a type of spreadsheet software (MS Office Excel or compatible) for this course. Also, a financial calculator is essential to your success in this course. You may bring one of the following financial calculators with you when you write the exams: Sharp EL-733A, EL-738, EL-738C, EL-738F, EL-738FC, Casio FC-200V, HP 10BII+, HP 12C (including Platinum series), HP17BII+, or Texas Instruments TI-BA II Plus. No other calculators are allowed unless written permission is given by the course coordinator prior to the examination.

Eve Daneva transferred to Athabasca University in November of 2018 and is currently enrolled in the Bachelor of Commerce program. She provides a bit of an introduction, stating "Hello! My name is Eve and I transferred to Athabasca University after completing a three-year college diploma. I am now working on obtaining the last few credits toward my bachelors before moving on to CPA certification. I am currently working at a small local accounting firm here in Barrie, Ontario, with my main work revolving around corporate NTRs, corporate tax returns, some bookkeeping, and personal tax return preparation. I work full-time in between AU semesters and part-time during semesters."

When asked to explain FNCE 371 to students, she states "This course covers the second half of the textbook used for FNCE 370. It builds on basic corporate finance concepts, like time value of money, NPV calculations, risk and return, etc. Main topics covered include cash budgets, credit policy, international finance concepts, leasing, risk management, and derivative securities."

As for the structure of the course, Eve explains that "Assignments one and two are made up of three cases each, while assignment three is two cases. The cases present a scenario and then ask about ten questions, both qualitative and quantitative, which require you to use knowledge from the textbook to answer. Assignments are generally way tougher than the exams and require general accounting knowledge from other courses, however, they are also not very harshly graded. My tutor mentioned that the cases were written by the course coordinator to help prep students for CPA cases, so they are much more involved than anything on the exams, however, they are very good practise to help you study for the exams. The midterm examination is made up of three cases which are similar format to the assignments, but easier. If you do well on the assignments, you should easily be able to do well on the midterm. The final examination contains multiple-choice questions, short answer questions, and calculation questions, and it is longer and harder than the midterm. The best practice for the final is going through the practice exam that is available on the course homepage."

Eve recommends this course to other students, stating "I really enjoyed this course as I love corporate finance! The assignments were the toughest part. The midterm I found the easiest."

As for any tips or tricks on completing this course, she states "Budget your time really well for the final exam. Even with doing my best to allocate enough time based off points, I still ran out of time on a few things near the end. Key is to make sure you complete everything worth the

most points and then it is not that big of a deal if you do not have time for some smaller questions because they are not worth a huge amount.”

When asked how communications with her tutors were for this course, she explains that “Exams and assignments are graded quickly. The tutor was a little frustrating to communicate with over the student study centre, especially when I was asking more complex questions relating to the assignments, however, I did get in touch over the phone and that worked out much better.”

Whether FNCE 371 is a degree or program requirement of yours, or the topics mentioned above are of interest to you, this course will have you learning interesting material surrounding the topic of corporate finance.

Brittany Daigle is 22 years old and completing her BSc in Computing Science & Information Systems with AU from Toronto, Ontario.



The Study Dude Personalized Education?

Marie Well



What would a personalized education look like to you?

Well, let's look at scenarios that *don't* characterize a personalized education:

A developmentally disabled student once appeared in my university class. He could barely spell basic words. But he was entitled to an education. Sadly, the prof would humiliate him, scorning him for his lack of performance. In my view, shame should never happen in education.

On the flipside, imagine a brilliant student who excels at math, but misses out on a big concept. As a result, she falls behind until she fails her first test. Later, she toys with dropping her math program.

A personalized education would not lead to author Jeffrey J. Selingo stating “The Internet allows any of us to watch lectures by star professors from around the world as many times as we need to master a concept. So why take a class with a mediocre professor droning on, especially if we never have a chance to ask him to repeat a section of the lecture we didn't quite understand” (p. 76 of 238, 30%). I can't be inspired to enroll in a university program in design. Why should I? I can buy, instead, a ten-hour illustrator course online for around ten dollars. And I can stop and revisit the video whenever needed.

So, if a droning professor doesn't characterize a personalized education, then what does? “Companies like Netflix and Amazon suggest movies or products by comparing us to similar customers. Google and Facebook target advertisements based on what we're reading in our email

messages or in wall posts from friends” (p. 73 of 238, 29%). So, a personalized education would zero in on your interests and strengths. And it would help you ration your courses amongst your top passions. And, as your interests evolved, your recommended courses would shift, too. “We have used this technology for years to help us with mundane choices like picking out your next movie from Netflix, but not to help a student select the right college or pass a class needed for a degree” (29%).

What would you call such a personalized degree? What would a degree that’s about 30% design, 20% health and fitness, 40% marketing, and 10% other be? Those are my passions, and that would be my degree. There would be no more need for electives or majors, either. Your creativity might skyrocket, too. At least, that’s what’s believed to happen when students take interdisciplinary studies. But if you wanted to go into grad studies, you’d just increase the percentage of your specialization.

But a personalized education is more than that. One example is a math course that was powered by “Knewton, an adaptive learning technology that watches a student’s every click and then adjusts on the fly what it delivers next When [the student] gets stuck on a problem related to linear functions, he’s pulled into a tutoring lesson. His screen reminds me of Facebook and the software has the feel of a video game” (29%).

This form of personalized education could lead to “no student left behind.” “Every year ... about one in ten first-year students arrive on campus unprepared to do math, so they need to take an extra course to brush up on the concepts they should have learned in high school. The university hasn’t had much success with these students in the past. Most of them either couldn’t get out of the remedial class or ended up later failing their first math course” (29%).

But no-one should fail. Except universities don’t provide enough resources for all students to succeed. For instance, many students enroll in math classes without the background. They may have taken math years ago, even decades ago—and forgot it all. So, they risk failing. Consider me: I took nearly ten advanced university math classes, scoring the top mark in almost every class. But I now can’t recall first year math. Consider this, also: I later took an anatomy course without any biology background. Zilch. And that’s where my grade was heading, so I dropped the class. My dream dashed because I lacked the background.

That’s where personalized education comes into play. The “hope is that Knewton can help guide more students through these introductory courses so they are no longer viewed as places where freshman sink or swim” (29%). Knewton could detect your missing background and tutor you accordingly. No fear of failure here.

Besides, learning is supposed to be fun, right?

You have a right to master your passions. And you, unquestionably, should have the right to graduate. Yet, too few students graduate while too many suffer enormous student debt. Given the time and effort we invest, personalized education needs to make our learning fail-proof, shame-proof, and fun.

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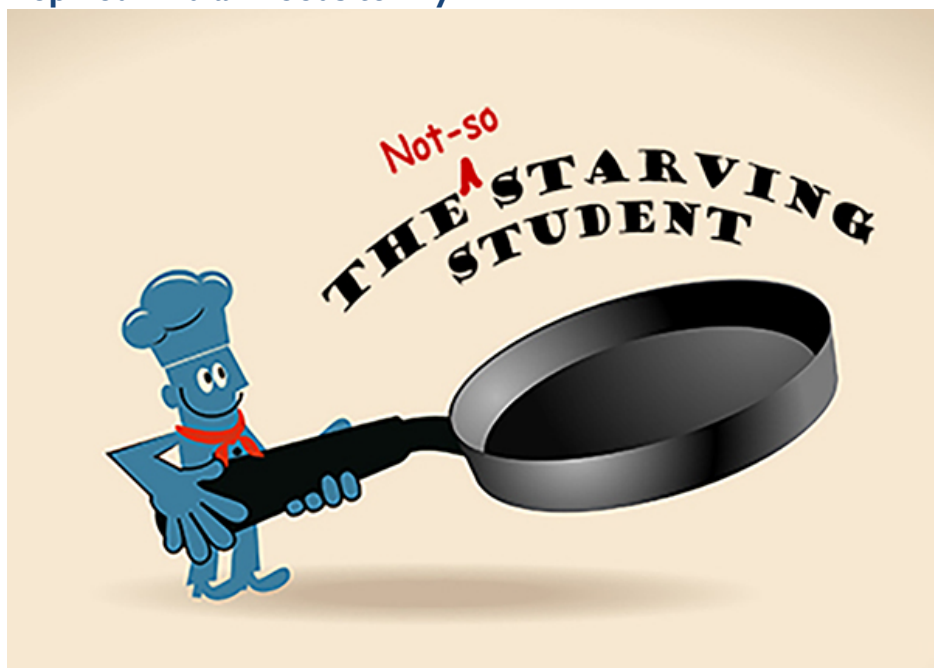
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The Not-So Starving Student

Top Four Indian Foods to Try

Xin Xu



Since venturing upon various Indian restaurants throughout the city, I've grown an appreciation for Indian cuisine. Traditional Indian dishes are packed with flavor and complexity and hold a special place in my list of favorite comfort foods. Indian food is heavily influenced by religion and history. Particularly, centuries of Islamic rule followed by Hindu rule have transformed the local food culture into what we recognize as Indian cuisine today. While I am no expert on Indian cuisine, especially the different variations across Northern and

Southern India that include flavors from bordering countries, I will focus on the regional favorites from the Indian subcontinent.

1. Samosas

Samosas are a fried appetizer dish that features spiced fillings including potatoes, peas, onions, lentils and various cuts of meat. Popular proteins include beef, chicken, goat, or lamb. While many foodies have tried the triangular fried samosas, these flavor-packed appetizers can also be half-moon shaped or square depending on the region. Two sauces are popular for accompanying samosas. The upper green sauce features a spicy mint chutney with minced cilantros, mint, and other herbs, while the lower brown sauce mix features ground tamarind and gives a sweeter and thicker texture.





2. Biryani

When it comes to rice, Indian cuisines really know how to season the rice to perfection! Unlike traditional rice dishes in other parts of Asia, South Asia uses a special elongated rice called basmati rice. Compared to Jasmine rice (typically used in Eastern Asia), basmati rice expands to nearly twice its size and becomes softer when cooked. Basmati rice is used to make this special flavored rice that has its origins in the Muslim culture. Various meats, spices, veggies and even eggs can be mixed with the rice to give a rich, fragrant flavor. Moreover, the entire meal can be made in one pot.

3. Masala Dosa

Dosa is a traditional South Indian crepe made from a thin layer of rice batter. The texture is crunchy and light without any hint of greasiness. Typically, these carbohydrates are served with a lentil-based stew, potatoes, and chutney sauces. The various small serving sizes of chutneys and stew (also known as sambar) allow you to sample many flavors at once. Like other Indian comfort foods, the dosa is a simple, hearty meal that leaves the foodie craving for more. Because of its lack of heavy grease, it can be enjoyed as a snack, an appetizer or a full meal.



4. Tandoori chicken

The tandoori chicken is a classic Indian dish that is known world-wide. The dish consists of roast chicken made with a special clay oven. Without the clay oven, the flavors can simply not be replicated. The same oven is also used to make naan, the flatbread that is a staple in many Indian meals. The enhanced flavor of the chicken comes from a yogurt-based marinade with spices such as red chilli that gives the dish a deeply appetizing red color. A well-made tandoori chicken is packed with flavor inside and out.

Xin Xu is a post-graduate health-science AU student, aspiring clinician, globe-trotter, parrot-breeder and tea-connoisseur.



Let's Talk about Sex, Baby

Dear Barb:

My boyfriend and I have been dating for six months. He's a really awesome guy, but I don't feel sexually attracted to him. We have lots in common and spend a lot of time together, but, when it comes to intimacy, everything changes. Our relationship has been this way right from the beginning, but I kept hoping it would change. We can go weeks or even a month without any intimacy, or even kissing. We have never talked about it or acknowledged it in any way. We just ignore it, as if it isn't important. If he stays over at my place, we sleep in the same bed, but there is no hugging, we go right to sleep. When he leaves, he gives me a kiss, but just a peck. I don't know how he feels about this, but it is beginning to wear on me, and I notice myself becoming attracted to other men. I am scared to bring this up because we may end up breaking up, and I enjoy his company so much. On the other hand, maybe I am just prolonging the inevitable. Looking for any advice you can offer.

Thanks, Stephanie.

Hi Stephanie:

Thanks for your letter. As you know, sexual intimacy is an important part of any relationship, but what is more important is that you communicate how you feel. For some people sexual intimacy is not a priority, and, if both parties feel the same way, there is no issue. However,

when one party is not happy with the situation, problems can arise. Since you mention that your relationship has always been this way, it's interesting that you chose to stay. Usually the strongest attraction is at the beginning of a relationship, and if it wasn't there at that time, it's unlikely to begin later on. You may want to consider how long you are willing to stay in this relationship.

Perhaps you two are meant to have a friendship, rather than an intimate relationship. You can remain friends while you are both in relationships with other people, if this is what you both want. If you find it difficult to discuss this with your partner, you may want to see a counsellor who may be able to help you to discover if there are any underlying reasons for this lack of sexual attraction. For example, there may be medical reasons, or emotional causes which are contributing. It's definitely worth exploring further before you walk away.

Best of luck in the future Stephanie.

Email your questions to voice@voicemagazine.org. Some submissions may be edited for length or to protect confidentiality; your real name and location will never be printed. This column is for entertainment only. The author is not a professional counsellor and this column is not intended to take the place of professional advice.



Poet Maeve
What I've Learned From Television

Wanda Waterman



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IMPORTANT DATES

- **Sep 10:** [Deadline to register in a course starting Oct 1](#)
- **Sep 15:** AUSU Get out the Vote Campaign Launches!
- **Sep 19:** [AUSU Council Meeting](#)
- **Sep 15:** [Oct degree requirements deadline](#)
- **Sept 30:** [Deadline to apply for course extension for Nov](#)
- **Oct 10:** [Deadline to register in a course starting Nov 1](#)

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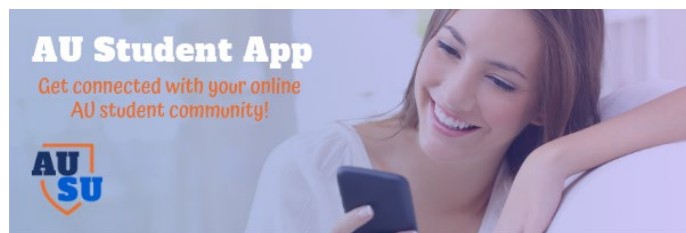
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